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Letter dated 31 December 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you as follows:

On 24 December 2001 Israeli forces brought an excavator to the road opposite the gate located to the east of the town of Ghajar. Over a two-hour period, it was used to dig a trench 150 metres long and half a metre deep extending from the gate along the road east of Ghajar in a southerly direction and reaching a point next to the eastern approach opposite the fortified Israeli position that was recently constructed.

The commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon immediately proceeded to the vicinity, as did units of the Lebanese liaison service and the South intelligence branch, and the work has been suspended up to the present time.

The trench dug by the Israeli forces is thought to be the footing on which a fence was to have been erected along the town boundary in occupied Syrian territory from the metal gate to the heights above Abbasiyah. This measure was to have been implemented pursuant to the decision taken by Israel about one month ago to prevent, as it claims, any infiltration from the Lebanese side after it had met with Lebanon's refusal to close a 20-metre gap in the town's northern environs and had subsequently ordered the Ghajar municipality to close it.

The inhabitants of Ghajar appealed to the Supreme Court of Israel against the decision to erect the fence when their representations to the relevant authorities during the previous month failed to dissuade the Israeli forces from taking a step that would separate the occupied town from its land and leave all of it on the Lebanese side.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 42, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sélim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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